

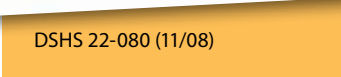


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Some of the quick answers are: Youth need a place to live, a job, money, medical and dental care, a postsecondary education plan, personal records, an adult or adults to turn to for help over time, information about how to accomplish their short and long-term goals for the future, and many other resources.

- It's a long list and the train is almost out of the station by age 17.5.
- Now is the time to get to work with foster youth in an intense and concentrated fashion.

The road there looks a little like this, with lots of choices and decisions to make:



Preparing foster youth to shape a future comes in building blocks and CA policy approaches this in three basic steps:



STEP 1 SHARED PLANNING

Transition planning is a focal point for the ISSP developed during the **Shared Planning** meeting for foster youth that are 17.5 years old. A youth's transition plan is meant to help the youth prepare for the everyday life tasks that he or she will have to accomplish once he or she turns 18. To insure youth on your caseload develop a transition plan engage them in discussions, which draw them out to identify their plan in a culturally sensitive way. Best practice for this Shared Planning meeting is to invite the youth by giving them ample notice and accommodating their school schedule. You should ask the youth whom they view as important people in their life that they would like to invite to this meeting. You should extend an invitation to these important people as well as youth allies such as foster parents, family members, and other youth or IL providers to support this youth driven process. You may also arrange phone access for those not able to attend in person.

Your knowledge of the youth's background and status, combined with information from the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment and Plan can be used to encourage youth to speak about their long and short-term goals when they transition out of the system. You can locate the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment and other resources at: www.caseylifeskills.org. CA policy requires social workers to complete an Independent Living Plan using the ACLSA with youth on their caseload if they cannot participate in an Independent Living program. You will create and document the Independent Living Plan (ILP) in FamLink. To create an ILP, go to the Casework tab, select the Planning icon and click on Independent Living. Write the update where the IL page is set up to receive text.

The **Checklist for Youth Exiting Care** (DSHS 18-212) provides a good guide for conducting the staffing. The purpose of the staffing is for you to work with the youth and help them develop an individual transition plan. You will also use this staffing to provide the youth with all necessary documents kept in their CA record. In addition, provide the youth with community resources or referrals to services they can access that make their transition more successful. The Checklist introduces topics for this discussion (i.e. educational opportunities, housing options, identicard, Medicaid to 21 etc).



Another available tool is the web site independence.wa.gov; this web site provides information on: jobs, education, financial aid, housing and budget. It would be especially useful for youth in rural areas that do not have access to an independent living program.



Visit independence.wa.gov for information about jobs, education, housing, and more.

Per new federal legislation, the transition plan must be youth driven and address specific areas that follow with some examples in each area:

- **Education** – GED; high school diploma; post secondary goals; scholarships such as Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV), Passport to College
- **Employment** – vocational skills, job search & experience, career goals
- **Housing** – rent; dorm; with relatives; homeless
- **Health Insurance** – Medicaid to 21; local medical resources
- **Local opportunities for mentors and continuing support** – mentors; interest groups; faith community; advocacy resources
- **Work force supports and employment services** – Work Force Councils; DVR; Job Corp



STEP 2 *Monthly Visit* • **DISCUSSIONS**

After the 17.5 Shared Planning meeting is complete, you need to follow up on the plan, track changes and continue offering appropriate resources; you can do this during the Monthly Health and Safety visit in the months that follow the 17.5 year old staffing.

- During these monthly face-to-face contacts, you provide services by answering any questions youth may have about their transition plan and update it **per youth's direction**, while providing guidance. In order to review the plan this is a good time to use the new Gameboard Pocket Guide. This tool can be used to discuss the reality of life choices the youth may be choosing to make.
- You must document these visits in case notes under "monthly health and safety visits." **"The Monthly Health & Safety Visits: Child Checklist"** has been updated and is a reminder tool for you to use and make sure the transition plan follow-up has covered the federally required topics.
- Remember, there may be funds available up to \$500.00 to help youth attain a goal that has been identified as part of their transition. To authorize this payment, go to the **Case-work** tab, go to **services**, click on **case**, click on **the participant** and use the **"Independent Living Services" FamLink payment Code**. For regions that have the IL Coordinator approve the code, make your request to them for this service.

How to work with youth served by contracted IL agencies:

- If you have youth on your caseload who participate in **IL contracted services**, you will receive updates on the youth's transition plan in the contractor quarterly progress reports.
- During the Health and Safety visit the progress report is to be used to talk with the youth about their transition plans. Updates must be made in case notes each month. Using the provider's report and integrating it in the conversation with youth helps develop common goals and support the youth in the direction they have selected.



STEP 3 *Exit • WRAP UP*

When youth on your caseload exit care you need to insure they transition to a safe, productive and stable situation. At the time youth exit care, CA policy requires youth receive several documents, which include a full copy of his/her health and education record collected during his/her time in care. Social Workers can remind youth about the local Independent Living program's transitional services which are a good support service; it is there for them when they turn 18 through 21. Social Workers can direct those youth pursuing postsecondary education to apply for ETV, Passport, or other financial aid scholarships.

What does the Social Worker need to do for the exit interview?

Policy requires you to inform youth exiting care about CA's policies and procedures around the length of time CA keeps a youth's record and how the youth may access his/her record after exiting care. The social worker should:

- Gather all the documents and information indicated on the *Checklist for Youth Exiting Care* (DSHS 18-212) that are available from the record and/or the IL provider and provide them to the youth prior to their exit from care.
- Use the Checklist to indicate what documents and information was given to the youth,
- Both the social worker and youth must sign the checklist.
- Give a copy of the signed Checklist to the youth and place another copy in the record.
- Inform the youth of the length of time CA keeps youth

What's important to remember in transition planning?

A skilled social worker starts on this task early; they know that to develop a good transition plan with each youth they need to:

- develop a good relationship
- set goals jointly
- recognize youth's successes, and
- engage youth in meeting these goals

...so that foster youth can experience a successful transition to adulthood.



**If you have questions,
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